



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

'Diagnosis, Management & Outcomes of Depression in Primary Care'

diamond

diamond Newsletter | JULY 2012

CURRENT FINDINGS

With *diamond* now in its 7th year of follow up, we have continued to collect extensive data from all of our participants.

During our 6th year of follow up, we completed interviews with 400 participants and received 426 completed surveys.

In 2011, we received additional funds to collect saliva samples from participants as part of a sub-study exploring the links between depressive mood and genetics. We are in the process of analysing the findings.



This addition allows us to further understand the well-being of the *diamond* participants.

Once again, the *diamond* team would like to thank you for your continuing time, effort and all of the information you have given to the *diamond* project.

At the 6th year of follow up, the characteristics of the participants in the *diamond* study include:

- 72% are females
- An average age of 54 years
- 86% were born in Australia
- 49% of the participants are married
- 24% live alone
- 44% are employed or studying
- 25% have completed a bachelor degree or higher



Sharing our Research Findings

In July 2012, *diamond* study coordinator, Ms Aves Middleton (PICTURED) will be travelling to Canberra to present some of the *diamond* study findings at the annual Primary Health Care Research Conference. Aves will be presenting on the "Impact of persistent suicidal thinking on health outcomes and health service use in the *diamond* study cohort".



This presentation will emphasise that those who have ongoing suicidal thinking over time tend to have poorer health and show an increased use of health services. These findings will be used to inform and influence how family doctors/general practitioners can better assist patients that are experiencing suicidal thoughts.

diamond Research Interviewers: **Aves, Emma, Kristi, Jo, Beth and Stu** have been speaking with you over the telephone and collecting information in greater detail.



We are aware that the survey and telephone may be taking you a long time to complete but it is important for us to ask a number of questions to allow the diamond research team to see how changes in emotional and physical health, relationships and life circumstances impact on overall wellbeing over time. We are very grateful for the time that you all spend each year sharing your experiences. THANK YOU!

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PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH UNIT

A SMALL TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION

We hope you have enjoyed using the movie voucher that has been enclosed with the survey over the past year. If you have not yet received a voucher from us, ensure to look out for it in your next survey pack coming to you in 2012. The movie voucher is a small token of our appreciation for the time and effort you have provided to the study so far.

Cinemas are located in Victoria at Airport West, Ballarat, Bendigo, Century City Walk, Coburg, Crown, Doncaster, Fountain Gate, Geelong, Jam Factory, Karingal, Knox, Mid Valley Morwell, Rivoli, Rosebud, Shepparton, Sorrento, Southland, Sunshine, Wangaratta, Warragul, Warrnambool and Werribee.



“... MAYBE IT’S IN THE GENES. CAN WORRY BE PASSED DOWN?”

We are delighted to report that we have had an overwhelming response to our invitation to participate in a new study linked to the *diamond* project for the collection of genetic information.

To date over 350 *diamond* study participants have taken part in the *diamond* genetics sub-study by returning a saliva sample. All donated saliva samples are now securely stored at the Australian Genome Research Facility Ltd Laboratory. Samples received to date are currently undergoing DNA (molecule that makes up your genes) extraction which will then be used for genetic analysis. Our research team

will then use the information from both the telephone interviews and the postal survey booklets collected over the past six years to examine the relationship between genes and depressive mood. We anticipate that this will help us better identify people early on who may be at risk for depression and aid clinicians and patients in making treatment decisions.

If you are one of the participants who has received a genetic screening kit and you are still keen to take part – it’s not too late! Please send us your saliva sample using the DNA kit and don’t forget to also send us your signed consent form in the reply paid

envelope supplied in the pack.

Once the research is completed, we will be sending you a summary of the results. As with all reports of *diamond* study findings, these results will be summarised for the whole study and no individual person can ever be recognised in the reports.

For those who took part we wish to thank you for your involvement in this part of the study and we look forward to sharing the results with you.

In the meantime, if you would like further information or if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact a member of the *diamond* study team on 8344 7449.

This research is funded by the L.E.W Carty Charitable Fund.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH TEAM CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

Recently we have had two University of Melbourne research honours students join the *diamond* research team to complete their final year of a University undergraduate degree (Honours Year).



In 2011, Han Na Kwak joined the team for eight months and analysed a sample of data collected as part of the *diamond* study specifically looking at long term antidepressant use amongst participants. Han Na found that a combination of individual and complex depressive symptoms amongst people who are prescribed and take antidepressant medications have an impact on their course of depression.



In March 2012, Tegan Usher joined the *diamond* study team after completing a Bachelor of Science majoring in Psychology in 2011. She will be researching the effectiveness of using bibliotherapy to treat depression. Bibliotherapy is the use of books based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) principles that individuals work through with the guidance of a therapist. We look forward to reporting on Tegan’s findings by the end of the year.



PhD student, Sandra Davidson has been part of the *diamond* team since 2006. Sandra has been investigating how people’s feelings about their social relationships and their level of social participation is related to recovery from depression. She hopes to finish her PhD research later this year and looks forward to sharing her findings. We wish Sandra the best of luck in the upcoming months.

HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED, CHANGED PHONE NUMBERS ... ?

If your address or phone number has changed, please fill in your new details below and return to us or call us on +61 3 8344 7449 with your new details.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone number: _____